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SOUTH DAKOTA 57701

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Fresh Tomato, Pesto, and Brie Penne

Serve 6-8

This dish is one of our August rituals. It showcases sun-ripened tomatoes and fresh pesto with penne coated in melted Brie. It's the kind of dish that's assembled in the time it takes to boil the pasta – fast! The key is the making a few large batches of pesto when basil is plentiful in the garden or at the farmers' market, then freezing in small packets for use in the fall and winter ahead. Every time a pesto packet is used, you'll close your eyes and be transported back to summer. Make a few pesto batches, and enjoy some right away with this pasta dish.

3 large tomatoes, seeded, 1/2-inch dice
1 packet Freezer Pesto (see below)
6-8 oz. Brie cheese, rind removed, torn into small chunks
1 lb. penne pasta

FREEZER PESTO:

Makes 3 packets

2 cups basil leaves, packed
1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
(or try pistachios or pecans)
3 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
(or, try Asiago or Pecorino Romano)
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt

FREEZER PESTO DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash the basil well, remove stems, and spin dry in a salad spinner. Spread the leaves on dry kitchen towel and toss so that any remaining moisture is absorbed.
2. Place the basil leaves, olive oil, walnuts, garlic, cheese and salt in a food processor or blender, and puree to desired consistency (we like ours with a granular character, not soupy.) Scrape down the sides of the container frequently for an even consistency.
3. Divide the pesto into three portions and place in small zipper bags. Flatten the pesto within the bag removing as much air as possible. Label the bags and place in the freezer for future use.

PASTA DISH DIRECTIONS:

1. Prepare the penne by bringing a large pan of water to a boil. Seed and dice the tomatoes while the water comes to a boil. Salt the water generously. Add the penne and stir periodically to prevent sticking. Cook until the penne is *al dente*. Drain the water from the pan.
2. Add the pieces of torn Brie, and toss. The cheese will melt quickly and coat the penne. Add the pesto and diced tomatoes, and toss again. Serve immediately. Chilled leftovers are tasty, too!